

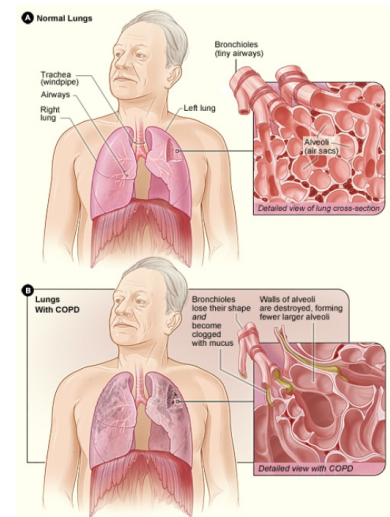
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

What is COPD?

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease is not a single disease, but a general term used to refer to a group of chronic lung diseases that block air flow in lungs, such as chronic bronchitis.

What are the symptoms of COPD?

- Shortness of breath, especially on exertion.
- Wheezing sound with breath.
- Cyanosis of lips and nails.
- Chronic cough accompanied by sputum production.
- Recurrent lower respiratory tract infections.
- Weight loss.



Factors that may lead to COPD:

- Smoking is the leading cause of COPD.
- Tobacco exposure (including second-hand smoke).
- Exposure to indoor air pollution from the use of solid fuels for cooking or heating.
- Exposure to dust and chemicals in workplaces (exposure to vapors, fumes and irritants)
- Recurrent infections of the lower respiratory tract during childhood.
- **Age:** The risk of developing COPD increases in people older than 35-40 years of age.
- **Genetics:** has some effect in rare cases.

How is COPD diagnosed?

- **Spirometry:** It is a simple test that measures the depth of a person's breathing and how quickly air enters and exits the lungs. Test is often performed on people aged 40 or older, due to the slow progression of the disease.
- Chest X-rays.
- CT scans.
- Blood oxygen saturation.

What are the complications of COPD?

- **Respiratory Tract Infections:** People with COPD are more likely to have frequent colds, flus and pneumonias. In addition, any respiratory infection can make breathing more difficult and damage lung tissue.
- **Hypertension:** It may cause high blood pressure in the arteries that bring blood to the lungs (pulmonary hypertension).
- **Heart Diseases:** For reasons not yet understood, the risk of heart disease, including heart attacks, increases.
- **Lung Cancer:** Smokers with chronic bronchitis are at higher risk of developing lung cancer than smokers without it.
- **Depression:** Some patients may become depressed as a result of difficulty breathing and inability to perform normal life activities.

Is there a cure for COPD?

There is no effective cure for COPD. The treatment plan relies on quitting smoking to alleviate the symptoms and avoid complications, in addition to following a healthy lifestyle (healthy nutrition in addition to physical activity) and using some drugs under medical supervision. Such drugs include:

- Bronchodilators that help relax the airway muscles and relieve cough and shortness of breath.

- Inhaled corticosteroids to reduce bronchitis and help prevent the progression and worsening of the disease.
- Oral steroids that help reduce bronchitis and prevent the progression and worsening of the disease.
- Phosphodiesterase-4 inhibitors, which are newly approved drugs to reduce bronchitis in people with severe COPD.
- Theophylline helps in improving breathing and preventing the worsening of the disease.
- Antibiotics to treat respiratory infections, such as acute bronchitis, pneumonia and influenza, and prevent the progression of symptoms.

Pulmonary Therapy:

- Oxygen therapy: in case of hypoxia and shortness of breath to help improve the health of patients with COPD.
- Pulmonary rehabilitation program: is a set of educational, physical and nutritional activities under the supervision of a group of specialists used for inpatients to improve their quality of life.
- Surgery for some rare cases to remove affected parts of the lung.
- Lung transplant for advanced cases.

Prevention for people at higher risk of COPD?

- Avoid exposure to indoor and outdoor polluted air and irritants.
- Avoid exposure to weather fluctuations and dust.
- Eat healthy food such as fruits, vegetables and meat (such as fish and poultry).
- Perform lung tests (spirometry) to assess lung function in people who are 45 years old and older.
- Take seasonal influenza vaccine to prevent recurrent respiratory infections.

- Take the necessary precautions and comply with safety instructions in factories and workplaces.

Clinical Health Education Department
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